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THE NATIONAL ERA.

WASHINGTON, JUNE 9, 1851.

For the National Era.

DORA'S CHILDREN.

A SEQUEL TO "THE DARKENED CASEMENT."

BY GRACE GREENWOOD.

LOUISE PRESTON.

Of all Dora's children, none changed so much in passing from childhood to maturity, as Louise. She was a pale, sad child when her mother left her—plain, and quite uninteresting to a casual observer, except as a look of suffering and languor might excite a brief feeling of half-pitiful interest. Yet, though exceedingly delicate, the child had no positive disease in her constitution; but she had unfortunate habits, almost as difficult to eradicate. Slender and weak-chested, she had not strength to sit erect at her writing or books, but would bend over them, hour after hour, utterly lost to all around her—for, with an intellect far beyond her years, study was her one absorbing passion.

Captain Preston did not begin by lecturing his shy and pensive little girl, or abruptly prohibiting those pursuits which were her greatest joy in life. He kindly strove to make her needful labors lighter by studying and reading with her, yet often interrupted Pauline and herself, in the midst of a lesson or an exercise, by proposing a ride or a ramble. Pauline, full of bounding life, was *toujours prete*, but Louise, at the first, set forth with visible though unexpressed reluctance. Not that she had no love for Nature, but that she enjoyed it best quietly and alone. She liked to steal out, after a day of study, to the sea-shore, seat herself upon some craggy rock, and watch the moon rise from the water. The dark magnificence of the scene, the loneliness of the shore, the clouds and the lights of heaven, the slow upward march of the moon—and, more than all, the swelling and moaning of the sea, impressed her with wondrous power—intoxicated her, it might almost be said, with sublimity—so filled her soul, that she took no note of time, and when she found herself at home, she scarce knew how, she would creep to her bed, chilled and exhausted, wondering that she felt no better for her little stroll. She loved the woods also, but when there, cared only to lie on some mossy bank, and gaze upward, watching the sunbeams struggling through the thick leaves, the blithe squirrels leaping from branch to branch, and the gleaming flight of the birds—to let her soul float from her, and lose herself in sad, but delicious reveries.

Gradually, and without apparent design, her father changed all this—made her ocean-visitings the times for active physical exercise—so filled her hands with shells and mosses, so tired her *little* human feet with clambering over rocks, that her soul forgot to overload itself with sublime thoughts. He changed her slow, solitary meditative strolls into pleasant, social rambles—often somewhat childish and idle, but never wholly objectless. There were always to be sought some flower or shrub, berries, nuts, ferns, wild grasses, or many-colored autumn leaves.

Captain Preston had more difficulty in overcoming the natural timidity of Louise, and getting her heartily in love with such sports as riding and boating. But, finally, this good work was also accomplished—Louise became a graceful and fearless horsewoman, while at rowing she might have rivalled Ellen Douglas herself.

Captain Preston was not alone the counsellor and guide, but the companion, the confidant, the dear, intimate friend of all his children; yet we can scarce wonder that he felt a deep, peculiar tenderness for that "poor little girl," of whom her dying mother said, "She lies nearest my heart," or that he gave himself with tireless devotion to the work of her moral and physical training. And great was his reward! sweet beyond expression his happiness, when, as the years went by, and the child grew into womanhood, he beheld the pale cheek flush, the dim eye brighten, the cold lips redden and grow full, and that slight and angular figure round into grace and symmetry. At nineteen, though still small, Louise was really beautiful in form—her chest being finely expanded, her neck and arms as plump as those of a Hebe, and the poise and carriage of her head being peculiarly spirited and graceful.

The beauty of her face remained an open question, though no one denied to it rare loveliness of expression. Her features were not quite regular—her nose was a thought too short, and her forehead a thought too low, perhaps—her mouth drooped too sadly at the corners, and there was sometimes a half-suspicious, half-haughty curl of the upper lip, neither gracious nor becoming; but her eyes and hair were unquestionably beautiful. Ah! I never can forget those large, deep, languid, violet eyes, so thickly shaded by dark, golden lashes. Her hair also was golden, far lighter than her mother's, but in texture and wavy abundance very like Dora's crowning glory. Louise, however, was quite unconscious of its exceeding beauty; she never made much of it, and there was little need—it made enough of itself. It seemed that it might almost have folded itself about her small Grecian head, in rich masses and shining undulations, without the aid of comb or band—and if it escaped its slight confinement, and came tumbling about her shoulders, you would beg her never to put it up again, it fell in such a bounteous shower of gold, such a cascade of bright curls. Think of hair of this rare hue, and large, dreamy, dark-blue eyes! What a bewitching combination!

But the idea of her plainness had so taken possession of the mind of Louise in her childhood, that now a young lady, though she knew herself in better health and spirits, she was no prettier, in her own estimation, than of old. She compared her round, little figure, her blue eyes and fair hair, with the tall, stately person, the splendid dark eyes and raven locks of her sister, and pronounced herself diminutive, insignificant, irredeemably plain. Ah! little did she know that to some hearts "*Mignonne*," as her father called her, was a sweeter and a dearer presence than the brilliant belle. In spite of the perfect mould, the force and nobility of Pauline's face, that of Louise was capable of a yet higher beauty—the loveliness and the power of a heart of greater native deeps—the sudden glow, the intense, ineffable light of genius—which, pouring from her soul, would overflow her plain features till they seemed almost transfigured.

Yet though Louise was a sad unbeliever in her own attractiveness, and ever received with wonder and childish gratitude the love of those nearest her, her own heart went out to all around in boundless tenderness; she seemed to lie at the feet of her father, her brother, and her sister, with the soul of love and worship in her great eyes—to anticipate and to share their joys and sorrows with an exquisite, tearful sympathy.

Pauline, while young, never quite comprehended the delicate, poetical mind of her sister, with its romance, its fair dreams, and strange fancies, and the fine, etherial genius which seemed floating about her as a spirit, rather than taking form in anything which she said or did—making her so charmingly incomprehensible, that Pauline laughed at, wondered at, and idolized her.

The father alone fully understood her, from having known and loved Dora—that sweet, frail rose, who seemed to have breathed the very soul of her sweetness into this last delicate bud. He understood the dreamy, retiring sensitiveness of his daughter, her modest distrust of herself, and the sad, unconscious jealousy, which too often weighed with a vague unhappiness on her heart.

Louise knew that she was overshadowed by the striking beauty of her sister; but at this she never repined, even in her most secret thought. She gloried in it rather, and would have said—as well might some little clover-blossom complain of being shadowed by a rose-tree, hanging its rich blossoms above her, and raining about her sweet-scented leaves.

But the effect of this overshadowing, and the result of her own extreme humility, was a timid shyness, an utter disinclination for general society. This feeling was strengthened by the consciousness of possessing few elegant accomplishments. The neglect of a fine talent for music, and a true genius for painting and poetry, had been the penalty paid for her admirable physical training, her pleasurable, care-free life of busy idleness. She sketched a little, played less, danced passably, but excelled in nothing, unless it was in a peculiar style of singing, or rather of musical recitation, of a slight, piano accompaniment, often improvised. It was truly a great pleasure to listen to her at the rare times when she could be prevailed upon to recite. One never heard from her anything hackneyed or commonplace—sometimes she gave quaint, delicious little songs, of which she alone knew the authorship—but oftener she chose the wildest lays and sweetest ballads of the great masters of song, and her voice was as tender and mournful, as deep, strong, and passionate, as the poet's own heart, while her rapt face flushed and paled with thoughts to whose full sweetness and power the utmost music of the human voice can give but broken expression.

This one accomplishment, or rather gift, which might have been cultivated to a point of rare artistic excellence, Louise lightly esteemed and seldom could be wrought upon to "make a display of her domestic music," as she called it, in society. So it was that by many, even of her familiar friends, the genius of Louise was quite unsuspected; so few had seen her face enhaloed by the rapture of music and song, or heard her voice in all its impassioned depth, its far-reaching sweetness, and startling dramatic power.

About three years from their marriage, the St. Johns had removed to a pleasant country residence near the city of New Haven—a change which promised well for Ernest's professional interests, for a music-teacher the husband of our proud Pauline continued to be. The little fortune of his wife was scarcely sufficient for their support; and even had it been ample, Ernest possessed a spirit of honest independence, which would have forbidden an idle reliance upon it. I will not pay so poor a compliment to the love-intuitions of my readers as to deem it needful to assure them that the union of Pauline and Ernest, so plainly in obedience to the wise, direct, and irresistible instincts of the heart, had thus far proved most happy and harmonious.

Deeply could Ernest feel the meaning of those lines which he loved often to read—the words of the lover-husband in Tennyson's "Miller's Daughter"—

> "Look through mine eyes with thine. True wife,
> Round my true heart thine arms entwine;
> My other dearer life in life,
> Look through my very soul with thine!"

And like that lover and his Alice, Ernest and his Pauline beheld—

> "The still affection of the heart
> Become an outward breathing type"—

but one of whom it it might *not* be said,

> It "into stillness past again,
> And left a want unknown before."

Their babe, their boy, their "little Ernest," lived to unite in one rich inheritance the mother's once proud and sparkling beauty, now softened with love and shaded by thought, with the pure spirituality which reposed depth on depth in his father's eyes, and the nobility which crowned his forehead.

Pauline insisted on having Louise with her for the first few months in her new home. During the autumn, it happened that the sisters first became well acquainted with an aunt of their mother's, Mrs. Edwards, of New York, who was spending some weeks in the city of Elms, on a visit to a young son who had lately entered Yale. Mrs. Edwards was that charming anomaly, a wealthy, handsome, fashionable woman, with a fresh, kindly, and generous heart. She was a fine musical amateur, and soon appreciated Ernest and his brilliant wife; but somewhat piqued by the shyness of Louise, she cultivated her at first, from a sort of curiosity, which finally deepened into a sincere interest, in "the little muse," as she often called her.

On her part, Louise soon forgot her reserve, ceased to be awed by the somewhat imposing elegance of her kinswoman, and ended by loving her most heartily. So complete was this captivation, that Mrs. Edwards had little difficulty in persuading her young friend to accompany her to New York, there to spend the winter in her family.

On the day succeeding her arrival, Louise wrote thus to her sister:

"I found our friends living in a large, elegant stone house, in —— Place, very far up town. I thought we should never get there from the boat. It was about eight o'clock when we arrived, and we went directly to the breakfast parlor. As soon as we entered, Mrs. Edwards was surrounded and nearly hugged to death by the children, the four youngest, all of whom are pretty, and one of whom I instantly elected as my especial favorite—Kitty, the loveliest creature alive. Mingled up with the children, were no less than three dogs—a fine Newfoundland and a brace of greyhounds, one of which, most delicately limbed and pure white, reminded me of Miss Mitford's 'Mayflower.' These came thrusting their long, slender heads into their mistress's hands, or laying them against her bosom, as sincerely, if not as noisily, glad as their human playmates.

"I think Mr. Edwards must be a good-natured, humorous sort of a man, for all this time he had been standing quietly on the hearth-rug, with a happy smile spread over his hale and handsome face. At length he said—

"'Well, if the children and dogs are quite through, I think I may take my turn'—and, throwing his arms about his laughing wife, kissed her half a dozen times. 'Now, well,' he cried, 'you may take your chance—come quick, or you'll lose it!'

"The young lady thus addressed, Miss Elinor Starr Edwards, aunt's only grown daughter, a tall, slender brunette, glided gracefully up to her mother, and kissed her cheek, more quietly than heartily, I thought. Oh, sister, that is not the way we should have kissed *our* mother, had God left her with us. I greatly fear I shall never love Miss Elinor. Introductions to strangers are always formidable affairs to me, you know, but I got through with those which followed quite bravely, I fancy. The breakfast passed off pleasantly, though the children were rather uproarious. The lunch, too, was a nice, little, social gathering, to which we came with keen appetites after our morning drive; but the dinner was less agreeable to me. We sat down at six, and did not rise till nearly eight—none of the children were present, except Master Harry, who, begging his fond mamma's pardon, is rather pert—and the conversation was principally about persons and things of which I knew nothing. After tea, which we took about nine, a few familiar friends of the family dropped in. The ladies were elegant in dress and manner, but slightly insipid, I thought—the gentlemen moustached, imperialized, and otherwise 'dandical.' Elinor sung and played with immense applause. She is a fine artistic performer, but her singing does not approach our Pauline's.

"My chamber has a pleasant lookout into the Park, is handsomely and luxuriously furnished, but is quite too large and lofty for my simple ideas of comfort. And, then, the servants, who are prowling about everywhere, have a way of whisking every little trifle back into its place, 'setting things to rights,' if you leave your room for a moment, which gives you the not over-pleasant feeling of being watched. But I suppose I shall get used to this sort of life presently.

"There goes the breakfast bell. Elinor has just been in to bid me good morning, and bring me a bunch of freshly-blown flowers from the conservatory. I think I shall love that girl a little, after all—but I don't believe she will ever care for me."

A few weeks later, Louise wrote as follows:

"You remember, dear Pauline, Mr. Walter Edwards, Heidelberg-bound, who spent two or three days with us at the time of Frederic's marriage. Well, he has returned home, having spent the years since we saw him in Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Palestine, England, Scotland, and Ireland. He comes last from France. But I must tell you of his arrival. He had been expected for some time; but as he had taken a fancy to come on a sailing vessel, no one knew at this season of the year on what day to look for him. Yesterday morning, as the weather was unpleasant, and I felt very comfortable in the library, I respectfully declined accompanying Mrs. Edwards on her calling tour—Ellen went to riding-school, and I was left quite alone. As I was reading Browning's 'Blot in the 'Scutcheon,' a glorious dramatic poem, I came upon an odd, delicious love song, beginning—

> 'There's a woman like a dew-drop—she's so purer than the purest.'

"I was seized with a desire to sing this in my own odd way—so ran to the music-room, opened the piano, and set to work. I had some difficulty at first, as the long lines and curiously-linked words were rather unmanageable, but I finally made an accompaniment which at least satisfied myself. As I was pouring out the wild, passionate words at the top, or rather at the *bottom*, of my voice, for I was striving to give the deep, fervent tones of Mertoun, as, half-fearful of surprise, he swings himself from the yew tree branches into the casement of Mildred, my eye was caught by a reflection in a mirror opposite. I stopped singing on the instant, turned, and saw, standing between me and the open door, a tall, dark, very dark, young man, with curly black hair, and a huge moustache, a fur cap [illegible] and a crimson cashmere waistcoat. Oh, dear, I shall never know how long the fellow had been watching me! My first impulse was to fly. I sprang up, and overturned the music stool at his feet. He caught it, returned it to its place, then, lifting his cap, introduced himself as Walter Edwards—as though there was any need of that!—and called me by my name. Strange that he should recollect me! I was stammering out an explanation of my being alone, with some commonplaces of welcome, when the children were let out upon him from the nursery—and in the *mêlée* I happily made my escape to my chamber, wherein I remained until near dinner time.

"To-day we have had a dinner-party, composed principally of family friends and some fellow passengers of Mr. Walter Edwards—or rather *Doctor*, as he brings that title with him from Heidelberg. It was quite a little congress of nations. We had two Germans, one a baron and the other a real live count, a Frenchman, an Italian, and a Spaniard! I *hope* that our good cousin really liked these various gentlemen—did *not* choose his guests in order to show off his own acquirements as a linguist. It is most true that he spoke fluently with each in his vernacular, and had the air of an every-day familiarity with every known tongue. How I wished that papa were present, to touch him up on the Chinese! I think that would have posed him. As for poor, stupid me, I could hardly muster French enough to keep up a little necessary conversation with the lively Parisian artist at my side.

"In truth, Dr. Walter Edwards is a very fine person—a grand person, I should even say—one who has done full justice to his native talent and admirable opportunities. I admire him, certainly, but I doubt whether I shall ever come near enough to him to like him. It is beautiful to see Elinor's worship of her stately brother—not that she says or does much, but she *looks* unmixed idolatry. I do love that girl! I have found that she is not cold at heart—only quiet in her demonstrations.

"I suppose we are now in for a round of parties. I never can learn to enjoy them, never can think one, with its glare and crush, its dainties and polkas, anything but a magnificent bore."

A week or two later, Louise wrote:

"Lo, a marvel! cousin Walter has shaved off his moustache!—his black, silky moustache, and all to please his mother. There was no help for it. Aunt Edwards actually limited his kisses to the back of her hand, and kept him on a short allowance at that. Elinor will never have done grieving for the loss of this badge European, and I at first thought Walter did not look as well without it; but I now see that it concealed one of the greatest beauties of his face—the short, delicately cut upper lip, with its peculiar tremulous play.

"The opera has opened, with Teresa-Truffi, a young Milanese, I believe, as Prima Donna. Mr Edwards has a box, and last night we all went to see *Lucrezia Borgia*. On another sheet I send you my musical impressions. I have only to give here a few trifles for your indulgent eye alone.

"When I was dressing for this opera, I was sadly out of heart. I knew that it was a place where people were expected to look brilliant, and you know brilliancy is not precisely my forte. For the first time in my life, I felt dissatisfied with my wardrobe—it is so very poor compared with Elinor's—and my little jewelry-box I shut in despair. Finally, I fixed on my dress of India muslin, with the slight embroidery—you remember it. I looped up the sleeves with natural rose-buds, wove a little myrtle-wreath for my hair, and flung over my shoulders my shawl of rose-colored crape. I wore but one ornament, the plain gold cross, containing some of mother's beautiful hair, which, since papa gave it me, on my last birthday, I have been wearing next my heart. Now suspended on my neck by its delicate chain, it really looked very prettily.

"Cousin Elinor was escorted by a certain Mr. Lincoln—or 'Tom Lincoln,' as everybody calls him—for whom I suspect she has a partiality; he certainly adores her. I was attended by my grave cousin, the Doctor, who might be Doctor Faustus, by the awe with which he still inspires me.

"In the box next us sat a splendidly handsome woman, about twenty-eight or thirty, I should say, superbly dressed, and all ablaze with diamonds. She bowed familiarly to my cousin, and favored me with a brief scrutiny through her double-barreled opera-glass, which I thought rather impertinent, as we sat too near to make it allowable. Walter told me that this was Miss Warrington, a great heiress, and a leader of fashion—that he fell in with her brother and herself in Italy, crossed the Alps, and finally the Atlantic, with them—that she was a clever, but rather a handsome woman, famous for her coquetries and conquests. He visited her box between the acts, and I could but observe that his coming gave her lively pleasure, while he soon appeared fascinated by her gay conversation and gracious manner. I hope he is not in complete thraldom there. I do not believe that Miss Warrington can be worthy of a heart so noble as his.

"This morning, while we were in the music-room, listening to Elinor's fine playing, Walter, for the first time, calling me cousin Louise, asked leave to remark slightly on my appearance of last evening. I know not how I could have suspected him of such an impertinence, but I thought he was about to criticise my plain toilet, and, drawing myself up, replied, coldly: 'If it so please you, sir.' 'Then,' he exclaimed, 'I must say that, in my eye, your dress was by far the most tasteful and beautiful in the house. It was soft, simple, classical, poetical—it was'——'Ah, that will do,' I cried, interrupting him; 'the wearer is already infinitely your debtor!'

"After this, I suppose I was in a particularly obliging mood, for when, on Elinor's leaving the piano, Walter spoke to me for the first time of the recitation he had accidentally heard on the day of his arrival, and plead for something in the same style, I sat down at once, and gave him that proud 'Love-Song of Montrose,' as well as I knew how. He professed unbounded delight, both by word and look. How I wish I could believe him! But it seems too much to believe, knowing, as I do, that he has just come from hearing the greatest singers and actors in the world."

I will quote no more from the letters of Louise, but must tell her story in my own briefer way. Yet, *entre nous*, dear reader, you do not lose much, for those letters from New York by no means grew in piquancy and interest. Pauline complained, indeed, that they were shorter and came less frequently than at first, and observed that the name of Walter Edwards now seldom appeared in those "few-and-far-between" home-dispatches. That some unfortunate coldness had arisen, to the detriment of proper cousinly regard, Pauline may have thought at New Haven, but appearances at New York were decidedly against such a supposition. In truth, most pleasant and familiar relations had gradually grown up between the two—an intimacy all the closer, it seemed, for the native reserve and sensitiveness of both. During the winter mornings, they read and sang; and when the sunny days came, rode and walked together, always in the full companionship of bright thoughts, the unison of a common and ever-increasing happiness. Ere she was aware, Louise had passed into a new and larger life; she breathed a diviner yet clearer atmosphere; the deepest mysteries of her nature took simplest revelations; [illegible] reveries, the quick-vanishing dreams of her early girlhood, took fair familiar shapes, and led her daily walk; and when the spring came there was in her heart a spring-time of softer sunshine, and deeper bloom, and more entrancing song.

It may also be true that—

> "In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love."

Certain it is, that, like the hero of "Locksley Hall," Mr. Walter Edwards felt "all the current of his being" setting towards his cousin. Thus it happened that, as one evening, after Louise had been singing his favorite, 'The Love-Song of Montrose"—

"Do you subscribe to the rash philosophy of these lines?" he asked, reading the verse:

> "'He either fears his fate too much,
> Or his desert is small,
> Who dare not put it to the touch,
> And gain, or lose it all.'"

"Most assuredly, Cousin Walter. I do not call it '*rash*,' but brave and true."

"Then you must not chide me, if I as boldly as reverently utter fateful words which may never be recalled, and say—and say—that I love you, dear Louise, I love you, and"——

What might have been the conclusion of this sentence is a matter for the vaguest conjecture; for, at that instant, good, unsuspecting Mr. Edwards came up and interrupted the colloquy of the cousins with some pleasant little *bon-mot*—so all was over, for that night at least.

In the morning, Mr. and Mrs. Edwards went out of town for a few days; Louise did not care to shut herself up in her chamber; Elinor was taking a lesson in the music room; Walter was probably in the library, and of course she could not go there; the parlors were too gorgeously desolate, so she strolled into the conservatory. Guided by some marvellous intuition, or it may possibly have been by the directions of the servants, Walter found her out and joined her. She was bending over a pot of dark-purple pansies, inhaling their fragrance, as he entered, and, looking up, she said, quietly—

"This simple flower is my favorite, of all the flowers that live. My mother so loved pansies—she had them near her to the last, and we have quite covered her grave with them."

Walter had bent to pluck a bunch, and, as he held them towards her, said—

"Then, Louise, can anything add to their dearness?"

"I do not know," she replied, blushing, "but I think not."

"Are you sure that nothing can take from their sacredness?"

"Yes, quite sure," she answered, with a smile.

Then, after pressing them to his lips, he said, in a deep, low tone, "I have kissed them with my love upon my lips—*now* will you take them?"

Those large blue eyes were cast down; the sweet face of Louise rapidly paled and flushed; Walter could scarcely hear, as he bent over her, the murmured "Yes"—*but she took the flowers*—then, ere another word could be spoken, she turned, flew through the hall and up the stairs, like a poor, frightened bird.

A little vexed, and a great deal pleased, Walter sauntered into the library, took up a book and retired to a favorite seat, behind the heavy velvet curtains, in the deep embrazure of a southern window. He had not been long there ensconced, when two lively, chatty young ladies, nieces of his father's, were shown into the library—just the last persons whom he cared to meet on that particular morning—so he resolved to remain perdu.

"Cousin Louise," as they affectionately called her, soon joined them, bringing Elinor's excuses. Louise was a poor gossip that morning. Walter could but pity her abstraction, and was happy that it seemed to escape the notice of her visitors. He fixed his thoughts, as intently as he found it possible, on the book before him, and took no heed of the conversation to which he was an unintentional listener, until his own name struck his ear.

"I assure you, Miss Preston," said Miss Sallie Wilson, "that Cousin Walter and Miss Warrington *are* engaged. I have it from the best authority that she nursed him when he sprained his ankle on the Appenines, and that he in return saved her life on the Alps. On crossing the Atlantic, they came near being wrecked; and when they expected to go down every minute, they were betrothed—at least, they vowed they would die in each other's arms."

"It is all quite true—I am absolutely certain," said Miss Marie; "and I know that Miss Warrington's and our mantuamaker, Madame Beaudeau, expects the order for the wedding dresses every day."

Smothering his laughter as best he could, at the recital of this comical romance, so utterly new to him, Walter impatiently sat out the remainder of the call, which, happily for Louise, was not long. That poor silly girl, after seeing her visitors off, hastened to her chamber, locked the door, and began rapidly walking the room, murmuring bitterly—"Fool, fool that I have been, to believe for a moment that he truly and seriously loved me!—*me*, a little, plain, ignorant, bashful Yankee girl! He was only playing with my affections, *pour passer le temps*, as he would say in his miserable, heartless French. I will go home to father and Frederic, or to Pauline and Ernest—they only can love me—they have somehow grown into the habit of loving me. Oh, I never should have left home! I have no other place in the wide world."

A knock at the door!

"Mr. Walter sends his compliments, and would Miss Preston be pleased to walk in the Park this fine morning?"

"No. Tell him I must beg to be excused."

Louise had received a letter from her sister by that morning's mail, at the close of which Pauline wrote—

"When I put little Ernest to bed this evening, as I kissed him good night for you, he asked so touchingly, 'When *Lulu* come home, mamma? *Ernie* not see her for *such a many days!*'

"I have just come from looking at him in his sleep. He seems a little restless, and his cheek is rather too hot. I am apprehensive of the scarlet fever, which has appeared in the neighborhood. But don't be troubled—he is not really ill."

Louise read this, at first, with scarce one thrill of fear. She idolized the child, but felt that he could not die. She was all too happy for a thought of death. But now she resolved to go to him at once; and when she joined her cousins at lunch, she announced her determination of returning to New Haven by the evening boat, stating that she was called home by the illness of Pauline's child.

Ah, Louise! Louise!

"If you really *must* go, cousin, brother Walter will of course accompany you," said Elinor.

"It is quite needless," replied Louise, somewhat coldly; "indeed, I would rather he should *not* take the trouble. I am certainly enough of a traveller to journey so short a distance alone."

"At least, you will allow me to see you to the boat?" said Walter, wounded to the soul, surprised and offended by the distrust and jealousy which he read only too well. Louise somewhat more graciously thanked him, gave assent, and returned to her chamber to pack her trunks. Elinor and Walter both accompanied her to the boat. From the first she parted with some tears; but Pauline herself, in her proudest days, could [illegible] of more supreme indifference than she assumed in taking leave of Walter. She shook hands carelessly with him at the cabin door, and did not even cast a look after him, as he led his sister to the carriage.

It was not till the night had closed in, and the boat was well under way, that Louise stole out on deck. There, standing apart, leaning against the railing, she looked into the dark water, and shed fast bitter tears. She thought of all the winter past, the happiest, dearest time of her life; she thought of Walter, of the evening before, and his words of love; of the morning and his pansies, so burdened with kisses—and how she too had kissed them, and hid them in her bosom. Shame and anger burned in her cheek at *this* remembrance. She caught them out, and would have flung them into the sea, but that she felt something harder than their slight stems in her grasp. It was her mother's cross, which had become unfastened from its chain. With a shudder at having so nearly lost this sacred treasure, she replaced it in her bosom, and with it the pansies. "Might it not be an omen of good?" she asked her heart.

Seeing that the night had grown darker, and feeling a few large rain-drops on her forehead, Louise returned to the cabin, flung herself on her birth, and finally slept. She was awakened by the cabin maid, who informed her that they had reached New Haven. In her thoughtless haste, she had never anticipated landing in the dark and the rain, and now felt utterly dismayed. It wanted yet some hours of morning, and she had a long ride into the country before her. Hastily tying on her bonnet, and wrapping her cloak about her, she passed along with the other passengers to the gangway. Here she found a crowd of men and boys, from whom she shrank in childish, speechless timidity. While looking around in tearful entreaty for an officer of the boat, or some kind stranger who would befriend her for a few moments by calling a carriage and attending to her baggage, she suddenly felt her arm drawn within that of a gentleman at her side. With a scream on her lips, she turned and looked into the smiling face of Walter Edwards! He led or rather bore her to a carriage near by, whereon her trunks were already deposited, handed her in out of the storm—out of *all* storms, for he sat down beside her, and held her hand in his.

Now, my dear reader, I know not what your wishes may be, but I should not feel justified in following Louise and Walter into that carriage, and reporting everything they said on their way to the pretty country home of Ernest and Pauline. Louise, however, has been known to affirm that she said little except to ask Walter's forgiveness for her jealous distrust, and that he said little after asking pardon for having allowed her to teach herself so severe a lesson. Yet I do not think that they dozed through the long ride, nor do I believe that their conversation was altogether dry and uninteresting, for when they reached "Sweetbriar cottage," at early breakfast time, Walter's fine face looked remarkably fresh and bright, and Louise, though she was all blushes and glad smiles, bore the traces of recent tears on her fair cheeks and long, golden eye-lashes. Feeling that Pauline, after the first surprise of our arrival, was looking at her rather too searchingly, she caught up little Ernest, (who, by the by, has not had the scarlet fever to this day,) and commenced an animated conversation with him. Ah, that was a bad move, Louise! for the child, tenderly wiping her eyes with his pinafore, cried out, pitifully—

"See, mamma, see! poor Lulu cry!"

In about a fortnight—I am not sure, though, that it was more than ten days from this morning—Louise was sitting on the simplest and prettiest of sofas in Pauline's little parlor, and (I have good authority for the assertion) with her head drooped on Walter's shoulder, or rather on his breast, while he was softly laying back the rich masses of shining hair from her forehead, and talking to her in low tones—for the poor child had a headache! Pauline, who was present, seemed busy with some papers at her writing-desk.

"May I ask what you are smiling over so archly, Cousin Pauline?" said Walter.

"Oh, nothing but a little passage in one of Louise's old letters."

"Ah, read it, pray," he exclaimed.

And Pauline read—

"In truth, Dr. Walter Edwards is a very fine person—a grand person, I should even say—one who has done full justice to his native talent and admirable opportunites. I admire him certainly, *but I doubt whether I shall ever come near enough to him to like him.*"

Louise was married at the home of her father and brother, one golden evening, early in September. Then met together a most delightful, though a strictly family, party. There was Captain Preston, somewhat paler and thinner than of old, and with a shade of sadness on his yet handsome face, but, nevertheless, looking the proud and happy father. There were the grand-parents—Frederic and his noble wife, with the Ellsworths—Ernest and Pauline—the children—Mr. and Mrs. Edwards—Elinor and Tom Lincoln, (now betrothed)—and George, the young Collegian.

The wedding was over. It was midnight, and Captain Preston was alone in his room—Dora's room, that "pleasant chamber which looked out on the sea." He stood in the soft moonlight, before the window, where, long years ago, he had seen *her* stand, waving her last farewell; and now, with flowing tears and great yearnings of the heart for the early lost, but ever loved one, he murmured—

"Have I been faithful to your charge, my Dora? Do you look with me on the happiness of our children?"

And there, in the stillness and loneliness of the night, an assurance came to him, voiceless, mysterious, but sweet and blessed, beyond what words may tell, and he *knew* that Dora was with him—within the circle of his arms—leaning her head against his heart, and smiling into his eyes, as in the dear old time.

Louise has become reconciled to the elegance and luxury which once almost dismayed her—adapted herself with true womanly tact to many of the forms and fashions once so wearisome and distasteful to her, and all without the loss of the early freshness, truth, and simplicity, of her character. She still speaks with a sort of playful awe of her "splendid husband," and can never cease to wonder what he found in her to admire and love. But to others, there is little mystery in the matter.

The brothers and sisters spend a few happy weeks together every year, at the old sea-side home, which has received so many picturesque additions, has been so be-winged and be-trellised, that it looks like a small congregation of summer-houses.

Oh, mothers, do you truly believe that Dora was *dead* through all these years?

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For the National Era.

UNCLE TOM'S CABIN:

OR,

LIFE AMONG THE LOWLY.

BY MRS. H. B. STOWE.

CHAPTER III.—*The Husband and Father.*

Mrs. Shelby had gone on her visit, and Eliza stood in the verandah, rather dejectedly looking after the retreating carriage, when a hand was laid on her shoulder. She turned, and a bright smile lighted up her fine eyes.

"George! is it you? How you frightened me! Well, I'm so glad you's come; missis is gone to spend the afternoon, so come into my little room, and we'll have the time all to ourselves."

Saying this, she drew him into a neat little apartment opening on the verandah, where she generally sat at her sewing, within call of her mistress.

"How glad I am! why don't you smile? and look at Harry—how he grows." The boy stood shyly regarding his father through his curls, holding close to the skirts of his mother's dress. "Isn't he beautiful?" said Eliza, lifting his long curls and kissing him.

"I wish he'd never been born," said George, bitterly. "I wish I'd never been born myself!"

Surprised and frightened, Eliza sat down, leaned her head on her husband's shoulder, and burst into tears.

"There now, Eliza, it's too bad for me to make you feel so, poor girl," said he, fondly, "it's too bad. Oh, how I wish you never had seen me—you might have been happy!"

"George! George! how can you talk so—what dreadful thing has happened, or is going to happen? I'm sure we've been very happy till lately."

"So we have, dear," said George. Then drawing his child on his knee, he gazed intently on his glorious dark eyes, and passed his hands through his long curls.

"Just like you, Eliza, and you are the handsomest woman I ever saw, and the best one I ever wish to see; but oh, I wish I'd never seen you, nor you me!"

"Oh, George! how can you!"

"Yes, Eliza, it's all misery! misery! misery! My life is bitter as wormwood—the very life is burning out of me. I'm a poor, miserable, forlorn drudge; I shall only drag you down with me, that's all. What's the use of our trying to do anything, trying to know anything, trying to be anything? What's the use of living? I wish I was dead!"

"Oh, now, dear George, that is really wicked. I know how you feel about losing your place in the factory, and you have a hard master, but pray be patient, and perhaps something"——

"Patient!" said he, interrupting her, "haven't I been patient? Did I say a word when he came and took me away, for no earthly reason, from the place where everybody was kind to me? I'd paid him truly every cent of my earnings—and they all say I worked well."

"Well, it *is* dreadful," said Eliza; "but, after all, he is your master, you know!"

"My master! and who made him my master? That's what I think of—what right has he to me? I'm a man as much as he is—I'm a better man than he is—I know more about business than he does—I'm a better manager than he is—I can read better than he can—I can write a better hand, and I've learned it all myself, and no thanks to him—I've learned it in spite of him—and now what right has he to make a dray-horse of me—to take me from things I can do, and do better than he can, and put me to work that any horse can do? He tries to do it—he says he'll bring me down and humble me—and he puts me to just the hardest, meanest, and dirtiest work, on purpose!"

"Oh, George! George! you frighten me! Why, I never heard you talk so—I'm afraid you'll do something dreadful. I don't wonder at your feelings at all; but oh, do be careful—do, do—for my sake, for Harry's!"

"I have been careful, and I have been patient, but it's growing worse and worse; flesh and blood can't bear it any longer—every chance he can get to insult and torment me he takes. I thought I could do my work well and keep on quiet, and have some time to read and learn out of work hours; but the more he sees I can do, the more he loads on. He says that though I don't say anything, he sees I've got the Devil in me, and he means to bring it out; and one of these days it will come out in a way that he won't like, or I'm mistaken."

"Oh, dear, what shall we do?" said Eliza, mournfully!

"It was only yesterday," said George, "as I was busy loading stones into a cart, that young mass'r Tom stood there, slashing his whip so near the horse that the creature was frightened. I asked him to stop, as pleasant as I could—he just kept right on. I begged him again, and then he turned on me, and began striking me. I held his hand, and then he screamed and kicked and ran to his father, and told him that I was fighting him. He came in a rage, and said he'd teach me who was my master; and he tied me to a tree, and cut switches for young master, and told him that he might whip me till he was tired—and he did do it. If I don't make him remember it some time!" and the brow of the young man grew dark, and his eyes burnt with an expression that made his young wife tremble. "Who made this man my master—that's what I want to know?" he said.

"Well," said Eliza, mournfully, "I always thought that I must obey my master and mistress, or I couldn't be a Christian."

"There is some sense in it in your case—they have brought you up like a child, fed you, clothed you, indulged you, and taught you, so that you have a good education—that is some reason why they should claim you. But I have been kicked and cuffed and sworn at, and at the best only let alone; and what do I owe? I've paid for all my keeping a hundred times over. I *won't* bear it. No, I *won't*," he said, clenching his hand with a fierce frown.

Eliza trembled, and was silent. She had never seen her husband in this mood before, and her gentle system of ethics seemed to bend like a reed in the surges of such passions.

"You know poor little Carlo, that you gave me," added George; "the creature has been about all the comfort that I've had. He has slept with me nights, and followed me around days, and kinder looked at me as if he understood how I felt. Well, the other day I was just feeding him with a few old scraps I picked up by the kitchen door, and mass'r came along, and said I was feeding him up at his expense, and that he couldn't afford to have every nigger keeping his dog, and ordered me to tie a stone to his neck and throw him in the pond."

"Oh, George, you didn't do it?"

"Do it? not I; but he did. Mass'r and Tom pelted the poor drowning creature with stones—poor thing, he looked at me so mournful, as if he wondered why I didn't save him. I had to take a flogging because I wouldn't do it myself. I don't care. Mass'r will find out that I'me one that whipping wont tame. My day will come yet, if he don't look out."

"What are you going to do? Oh, George, don't do anything wicked; if you only trust in God, and try to do right, he'll deliver you."

"I a'nt a Christian like you, Eliza; my heart's full of bitterness; I can't trust in God. Why does he let things be so?"

"Oh, George, we must have faith. Mistress says that when all things go wrong to us, we must believe that God is doing the very best."

"That's easy to say for people that are sitting on their sofas and riding in their carriages; but let 'em be where I am, I guess t'would come some harder. I wish I could be good, but my heart burns, and can't be reconciled, anyhow—you couldn't in my place—you can't now, if I tell you all I've got to say. You don't know the whole yet."

"What can be coming now!"

"Well, lately mass'r has been saying that he was a fool to let me marry off the place; that he hates Mr. Shelby and all his tribe, because they are proud, and hold their heads up above him, and that I've got proud notions from you; and he says he wont let me come here any more, and that I shall take a wife and settle down on his place. At first he only scolded and grumbled these things, but yesterday he told me that I should take Mina for a wife, and settle down in a cabin with her, or he would sell me down river."

"Why—but you were married to *me*, by the minister, as much as if you'd been a white man!" said Eliza, simply.

"Don't you know a slave can't be married? There is no law in this country for that; I can't hold you for my wife, if mass'r chooses to part us. That's why I wish I'd never seen you—why I wish I'd never been born—it would have been better for us both—it would have been better for this poor child if he had never been born. All this may happen to him yet!"

"Oh, but master is so kind!"

"Yes, but who knows—he may die—and then he may be sold to nobody knows who. What pleasure is it that he is handsome, and smart, and bright? I tell you, Eliza, that a sword will pierce through your soul for every good and pleasant thing your child is or has—it will make him worth too much for you to keep!"

The words smote heavily on Eliza's heart, the vision of the trader came before her eyes, and, as if some one had struck her a deadly blow, she turned pale and gasped for breath. She looked nervously out on the verandah, where the boy, tired of the grave conversation, had retired, and where he was riding triumphantly up and down on Mr. Shelby's walking stick. She would have spoken to tell her husband her fears, but checked herself.

No, no; he has enough to bear, poor fellow, she thought. No, I wont tell him; besides, it ain't true; missis never deceives us.

"So Eliza, my girl," said the husband, mournfully, "bear up now; and good bye, for I am going."

"Going, George? Going where?"

"To Canada," said he, straightening himself up; "and when I'm there I'll buy you; that's all the hope that's left us. You have a kind master, that won't refuse to sell you. I'll buy you and the boy—God helping me, I will!"

"Oh, dreadful! if you should be taken."

"I won't be taken—Eliza, I'll *die* first. I'll be free or I'll die!"

"You won't kill yourself!"

"No need of that! they will kill me fast enough; they never will get me down the river alive!"

"Oh, George, for my sake, do be careful! don't do anything wicked—don't lay hands on yourself or anybody else! you are tempted too much—too much; but don't—go you must—but go carefully, prudently; pray God to help you."

"Well, then, Eliza, hear my plan. Mass'r took it into his head to send me right by here with a note to Mr. Symmes, that lives a mile past. I believe he expected I should come here to tell you what I have—it would please him if he thought it would aggravate 'Shelby's folks,' as he calls 'em. I'm going home quite resigned, you understand, as if all was over. I've got some preparations made—and there are those that will help me, and in the course of a week or so I shall be among the missing some day. Pray for me, Eliza; perhaps the good Lord will hear you."

"Oh, pray yourself, George, and go trusting in Him—then you won't do anything wicked."

"Well now, *good bye*," said George, holding Eliza's hands, and gazing into her eyes without moving. They stood silent—then there were last words and sobs and bitter weeping—such parting as those may make whose hope to meet again is as the spider's web—and the husband and wife were parted.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

For the National Era.

LET US GO TO WORK.

The articles published in the *Era* some months since, on the subject of organizing the friends of liberty, have called out many approving propositions, but so far as can be seen no plan has yet been adopted.

Thousands are anxious for a concentration of all that agree upon the main question, while other topics press themselves into our notice and threaten to divide us.

The anti-slavery element may be divided into six parts.

1. The first is a small, but zealous and talented party that charge all the evils of slavery upon our Constitution and the Union of the States, and insist upon a dissolution of the Union as the best remedy for this great evil. This party usually refuses to vote or take any part in the political movements of the day.

2. The second is a small political party, who believe that under our Constitution Congress has power to abolish slavery in the States. This party is not large, but exerts a great influence, being made up of some of the best and ablest men of the age.

3. The third is a kind of anti-slavery party, that is personified in Seward and Greeley, very

[SEE FOURTH PAGE.]